

WATER QUALITY PROTECTION DIVISION
Weekly Activity Report – Week Ending 09/25/15

NORTH AMERICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (NADB) AWARD: Region 6 Assistance Programs Branch staff has finalized the Funding Recommendation and Commitment Notice for the North American Development Bank in support of the United States/Mexico Border Infrastructure Program. The grant will provide financial assistance to communities along the U.S./Mexico Border area. The grant application was received in Region 6 during 4th quarter Fiscal Year 2015. The Funding Recommendation and Commitment Notice were used to prepare the award document in the amount of \$2,980,329. **Salvador Gandara, 665-3194 (6WQ-AB); Gilbert Tellez, (915) 533-7273 (6WQ-AB)**

\$23.3 MILLION TEXAS DWSRF DRAW FOR MONTH OF SEPTEMBER: This month the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) has drawn down their largest single month amount in the history of their Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program. As of September 23, 2015, the TWDB has drawn down \$23,387,960 in DWSRF program funds, of which \$14.2 million was a single draw for reimbursement of construction projects. As a result, their ULO balance of \$174 million is bringing them closer to reaching our agency's goal of expending all legacy ULO by September 2016. TWDB will continue to submit their DWSRF ULO report to EPA on a quarterly basis. Upon receipt of the report, Region 6 will carefully scrutinize it to help decide any next course of action, in an effort to avoid a ULO non-compliance situation. **Claudia Hosch, 665-6464; Maurice Rawls, 665-8049; Ruben Camacho, 665-7599; Javier Ballí, 665-7261**

TRASH FREE WATERS: Doug Jacobson and Renee Bellew (6PD-U) worked with representatives from EPA Headquarters to set up two meetings in Texas held in Galveston on September 16 and Dallas on September 18. The Galveston meeting was held in conjunction with the non-profit organizations Artist Boat and Galveston County Parks Board to develop a program to eliminate trash and abandoned recreational items left on beaches by the 6 million visitors to Galveston Island each year. The Dallas meeting convened municipal and NGO representatives in person and by telephone to develop a new project to replace the "tire" project found in HQ's Trash Free Waters Plan for the Gulf of Mexico States. After much discussion and consideration of a half dozen projects, the group decided to expand the "Adopt A ..." concept. Recognizing the strong State pride that Texans feel, the group will seek to synergize the many volunteer efforts and public awareness campaigns that can be found in programs like Adopt A Highway, Adopt A Street, etc. and Don't Mess With Texas campaign. Additional components will be developed to eliminate littering, including working with manufacturers and retailers, utilizing social media, and increasing outdoor learning. Project work plans will be developed over the next few weeks, and as each project is implemented, project champions will lead the charge with the facilitation from EPA. **Doug Jacobson, 65-6692; Renee Bellew, 665-2793**

ILLINOIS RIVER WATERSHED MODELING PROJECT PRINCIPALS CALL: On September 22, 2015, EPA Region 6 will hold a principals' call with representatives from Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality, Arkansas Natural Resources Commission, Oklahoma Conservation Commission, Oklahoma Secretary of Energy and Environment, Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, Oklahoma Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, Oklahoma Scenic Rivers Commission and the Cherokee Nation to discuss the Illinois River Watershed Modeling project. This call will discuss the status of the project including the outcome of the peer review of the model and will set the stage for reduction scenario discussion to inform the eventual drafting of TMDLs for the watershed. **Taimur Shaikh, 665-7181; Stacey Dwyer, 665-7538**

PRE PERMIT CONSULTATION WITH PUEBLO OF ISLETA AND PUEBLO OF SANTA ANA: The Associate Director of the NPDES Branch and the NPDES Permits Section Chief conducted two pre permit consultation meetings with Tribal Environmental staff on September 17-18, 2015. The meeting with the Pueblo of Isleta environmental staff focused on the upcoming renewal of the Albuquerque Bernalillo NPDES permit. Pueblo of Isleta requested stronger language in the NPDES permit to require the permittee to issue final reports on actions taken to address problems identified at the plant. EPA will be exploring Next Generation tools and language to be incorporated into the next permit cycle. The Pueblo of Santa Ana has Treatment as a State for Water Quality Standards. EPA discussed with the representatives their rights under 401 a 2 as a downstream "State," whose water quality standards must be protected. The environmental staff indicates that they are exploring TAS for TMDLs as well as 303 (d) impaired waters. **Stacey Dwyer, 665-6729; Brent Larsen, 665-7523**

OKLAHOMA CORPORATION COMMISSION DENIES FIVE DISPOSAL WELL PERMITS: For the first time, Commissioners at the Oklahoma Corporation Commission (OCC) turned down five disposal well permits due to seismicity concerns. Previously, operators agreed to additional restrictions and were given an order allowing disposal operations. This time the applications were denied. On September 18th, two M4+ earthquakes rocked the area around numerous oil tank farms at Cushing, Oklahoma. Cushing's nickname is "The Pipeline Crossroads of the World." It's one of the largest crude oil storage hubs in the world with approximately 85 million barrels of crude oil storage capacity. Two disposal wells in the area have been shut-down and three others had their rates reduced. Geologist, Robert Jackman sent Matt Skinner at OCC, an 'open email' pointing out the nature of the Arbuckle formation (lots of fractures and natural caverns), makes the orders to plug back a short distance above the basement to be ineffective. (This concern had been mentioned over a year ago in a discussion between EPA and OCC representatives.) Mr. Jackman's e-mail went on to request clarification on what limit of disposal volumes was considered to be safe. **Nancy Dorsey, 665-2294; Philip Dellinger, 665-8324**